592 (except for cleaning) only by men of the group
342 and their male visitors. Within, a passage leads to the central courtyard, round which
[352] rooms open off on two or three sides. These include the ancestor-shrine of the group, several store-rooms for clothing, vessels and paddy (stored in carved wooden chests), one or more bed- and [55] sitting-rooms each containing a bedroll, bench, wooden stools and a rope to hang clothes; and a small room used by women during their delivery and menstrual seclusions. Beyond the courtyard to the west is a long narrow dining hall with a large kitchen behind it, and behind this the back verandah occupied only by servants, women and children. Upstairs may be four or five empty bedrooms in which women receive their visiting husbands. Men born into the group seldom enter the upstairs' rooms and may not use the women's staircase.

[427] Outside in the courtyard a separate building
[987] may be devoted to storing paddy paid as rents
[343] by the group's tenants. The upstairs of the building is often set aside for the karanavan's[1] use; here he sleeps, is served with food by women of the house, entertains his friends and keeps records of the group's economic transactions. If the group is large, a second separate building is often reserved for junior men to sleep, read and entertain friends when they are
593 not visiting their wives. In village headmen's
342 and chiefly property-groups whose women often have Nambudiri husbands, a separate building with its own kitchen, granary and Brahman

[1] [Eldest man of the property-group ... Analyst]

593 servants is set aside at the expense of the tara-
342 vad to entertain these men when they visit their wives, sometimes for two or three days at a time.

351 The buildings and courtyard are surrounded
515 by a shady garden of coconut, jackfruit, cashew
●[343] nut and mango trees. Chiefs and village headmen have a private bathing pool with stone steps running round it in their own garden; retainer [56] Nayars more often bathe in the large public bathing pools attached to the temples and reserved for "clean" castes of the village. Men and women bathe and swim daily in public clad in a loin-cloth, on opposite sides of the pool.
[526] Both boys and girls become excellent swimmers and divers almost as soon as they can walk.

351 In the southeast corner of the garden is an
[764] open space set aside as the group's cremation
[778] ground, while at another corner is a dense shrubbery devoted to the snake-gods of the group, in which small stone images of cobras are set up.

421 The property-group was traditionally a cor-
592 porate group in other sense than those in which
672 this term applied to the lineage. Whereas the lineage was held responsible in cases of offence against religious law (sins, or crimes against the village community), the property-group was responsible in cases of debt or theft (torts). The headman, on behalf of the group, must make restitution for such offences from the group's jointly owned funds. In addition, as representative of the group in the assembly, he must pay annual dues to the temple funds. Through its headman, the group also acted as a single legal personality in the payment of wages to its

2:Gough E-4, 5 (1947-1949)1961 A Wil Kerala A Wil
Central Kerala Nayar

mal segment of one mother and her children within the property group. Each property group usually had a separate garden name in addition to its lineage name.

Residence Among retainer Nayars of this area a property group usually owned only one homestead and was simultaneously a dwelling group. Occasionally among retainers, however, and more commonly among chiefs and village headmen, a property group which increased in size might build two or more homesteads on its lands. If the houses were adjacent they were usually occupied indiscriminately by members and cooking was done only in one. If the homesteads were some distance apart each might be occupied by a minimal segment of the group. The kāranavan would manage the resources of the whole group but would allocate provisions separately to each household. Separate cooking would be carried on.

Spouses lived separately in their natal units, with the husband visiting the wife. We shall call this type of residence *duolocal*.

A traditional homestead of retainer or village headman's rank centered about a large main building with two stories, separate staircases for men and women, and, in the middle of the building, a small courtyard open to the sky. The house faced east, and was fronted by a spacious veranda, used normally by men of the group and their male visitors. Within, a passage led to the central courtyard, round which rooms opened off on three sides. They included an ancestor shrine; several storerooms containing clothing in boxes, metal vessels, jewelry, weapons, and paddy (unhusked rice) in large wooden chests; one or more rooms for everyday use, each with sleeping mats, a bench, wooden stools and chests, and a rope to hang clothes; and a small room occupied by women during their delivery and menstrual seclusions. A roofed cloister with pillars ran between the open courtyard and the rooms. Beyond the courtyard to the west was a long, narrow dining hall with a large kitchen behind it. Behind this lay the back veranda, normally used only by women and children. Upstairs might be four or five bedrooms in which women received their husbands. Men born into the group seldom entered these upstairs rooms and were forbidden to use the women's staircase.

Outside the house in the outer courtyard a separate building served as a granary for paddy. The upstairs of this building was often set aside for the kāranavan's use. Here he slept, was served with food by women of the house, entertained co-villagers, and kept records of the group's economic transactions. If the group was large a second separate building was often reserved to junior men for reading, en-

2:Gough E-4, 5 (1947-1949)1961 AWll Kerala AWll
Central Kerala Nayar

tertaining friends, or sleeping when they were not visiting their wives. A cowshed a few yards from the residential buildings completed the arrangements in a normal retainer homestead. In village headmen's and chiefly households whose women often had Brahman husbands a separate building with its own kitchen was set aside to entertain the men when they visited their wives.

The buildings and outer courtyard were surrounded by a shady garden of coconut, jack, cashew, and mango trees. Chiefs and village headmen had a private bathing pool with stone steps round it in their own gardens. Retainers more often bathed in the large public bathing pools attached to the temples and reserved for "clean" castes of the village. Men and women bathed and swam daily on opposite sides of the pool.

In the southwest corner of the garden an open space was set aside as the property group's cremation ground, entered only at funerals. In another corner was a dense shrubbery devoted to the snake gods of the group. Offerings were made there to small stone images of cobras, and if real cobras appeared they were regarded as manifestations of these deities.

A high bamboo fence surrounded the whole establishment. It was entered through a wooden gatehouse within which armed men might sit on guard in time of war.

Economic Activities The property group obtained almost all of its subsistence from garden and paddy lands held on tenure from the village landlord and cultivated by Tiyyar sub-tenants or by Pulaya serfs. The property group surrendered part of its produce in kind as dues to the landlord. It retained part for maintenance, stored part for repayment to its serfs as daily subsistence, and gave portions twice annually to the village servant households. Tiyyar tenants retained enough for their own needs, but gave the bulk of their produce to their Nayar masters. Increasingly during the period of European trade the property group also sold spices and coconuts to Muslim middlemen in exchange for cash or cloth. The cash was used to buy brass and silver vessels, gold ornaments and jewelry, and other luxury goods from the towns. The property group gave some cloth to its serfs and tenants at festivals once a year.

The kāranavan managed all these transactions and controlled the group's estate. He might allocate specific tasks of management to juniors, but no payment was made on behalf of the group, no crops were sold, and no goods were consumed without his consent. Junior men serving in the king's wars received small daily cash sums on an

6:Fawcett G-5 (ca. 1900)1915

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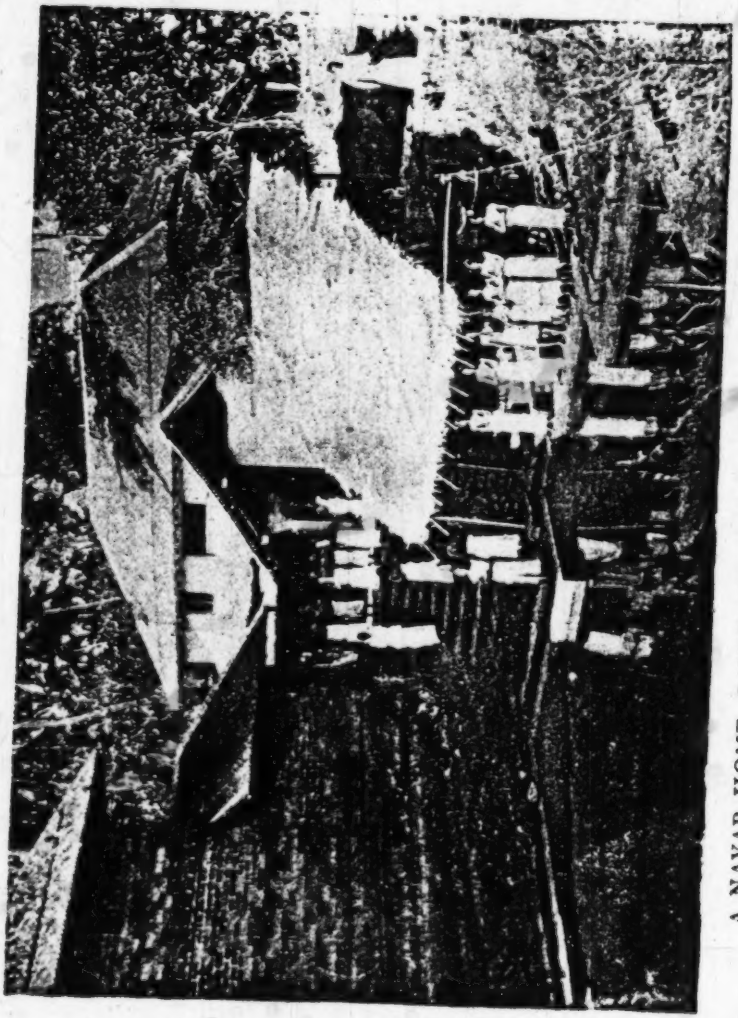

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A NAYAR HOME, PANUR, N. MALABAR. THE BATHING TANK AND BATHING SHED IN THE FOREGROUND.

[Facing p. 262]

9:Iyer E-4, 5 (ca. 1902-1906)1912
AWll Kerala AWll
Nayar

361 564 **Habitations.** The Nayars, like other Malayali Hindus, are not lovers of towns, but generally live in detached houses, with large compounds and good gardens. The strict customs of caste purity and impurity in former times made them desert places where they were liable to be polluted by the members of very low castes. They generally select the site of a house either on the margin of a fertile valley or ravine with bright green fields of rice in 351 front. The entrance to their compounds, which are often somewhat raised off the ground by laterite or mud walls, is at some little distance from the main house, and consists of a door in the centre of a strong gate-way, which is the first that attracts one's attention as the dwelling is approached. The gate is quaintly constructed, and the surroundings are exceptionally neat and 417 tidy. It is also essential that a stair or a ladder should lead up to it from the bank of a green level paddy flat, reminding one of the days when security of life and property depended upon one's own ability to laugh a seige to scorn; when a Nayar house was his castle, and when at the gate-way were posted retainers to keep watch and ward against enemies. 343 Seats for them to rest on, right and left, both outside and inside, a solid quaintly carved door and lintel, a room above approached by a ladder from inside, with windows, or openings whence shots were discharged on lawless intruders, and finally a thatched roof, complete the characterstics of a gate house. 351 Permission to build such a gate house was a rare privilege and 342 had to be obtained from the rulers, but with a change in the old 787 order of things, this restriction has, like many others of the kind, ceased to exist. The plan and other details of the structure of a Nayar house are determined in strict conformity with the principles of the ancient Hindu science of architecture based on astrology.[1] A compound or garden is first selected and measured out into a square plot and is then divided into four parts by imaginary lines running lengthwise and breadthwise through the centre or middle of it. Either the north-east or south-west portion is chosen for the site of a house, the former being pre- 764 ferred to the latter. The south-east corner is generally set apart as the family burial-ground. There are again special spots selected for the well, tank, cow-shed, serpent grove and the family deity. The selection of the site for the house is

1. Chandrika.

9:Iyer E-4, 5 (ca. 1902-1906)1912
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342 recently were thatched are now being tiled with tiles of European pattern manufactured either locally or in Mangalore.
342 In these days of comparative peace and security of life and
178 property from marauders and free-booters, the necessity for massive structures has ceased to exist, and, coupled with this, the improved notions of architecture, derived from an easy intercourse with more civilised centres, the rapid progress of education, and with it a better knowledge of, and regard for, sanitation and hygiene, have wrought remarkable changes in the construction of buildings, so that a better class of houses, well built, airy, and commodious, is displacing the old ones with their small, dark and ill-ventilated rooms.

351 As part of the surroundings of the dwellings in the same
[343] compound, there are frequently seen a cattle shed, an excavated
[312] tank for bathing purposes, often full of fish and water lilies, a
[515] well so arranged as to admit of water being drawn directly from it to the kitchen, an out-house *(matam)* for the Brahman
[574] travellers or visitors, and, lastly, a small edifice for the family
[343] deity. The gardens surrounding the houses are adorned with mango and jack trees, immense bananas, groves of cocoanut
[245] and areca palms and various kinds of flowers. Thus, in most places, their houses, which are occupied by fine types of humanity, (well made men and shapely women), are situated beneath the grateful shade of magnificent avenues of trees.

356 Four hundred years ago, a Portuguese traveller, writing
[175] on the subject, remarks upon the Nayar houses as being scrupulously clean and neat. Without any exaggeration it may be said that they are proverbially so, and the women are either naturally endowed with a taste, or are trained from early child-
352 hood, to keep the houses and everything therein neat and clean.
[556] Those of the richer and middle classes are in these days fur-
[177] nished with articles of European manufacture, and all their domestic utensils, for daily use, are made either of bell-metal, copper or brass, all well cleaned and washed early every morning.

415 The furniture of the poorer classes is very simple; a metal
352 pot with a spout, a few metal plates and saucers, a few metal
412 pans of different sizes, a spitoon of brass, a few mats, a knife,
184 a cot or two, a betel box, and a few wooden bins for grains, are nearly all the requirements of a household in this respect.

342 The house itself is called by several names according to
564 the occupant's caste, that of an ordinary Nayar being a *veedu*

9:Iyer E-4, 5 (ca. 1902-1906) 1912
AWll Kerala AWll
Nayar

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The construction of a house on the left or back of a Vishnu temple, on the right of a Siva or Durga temple, or by the right side of a Sastha temple, will cause calamities to the occupants; but that on the opposite side will bring prosperity.

Houses should not be constructed near temples, paddy flats, hermitages, the sea, hills, or cow-shed; if constructed near temples, they should be lower in height than the religious edifices.

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Houses, constructed on a dry-land (*paramba*) with an elevation to the north-west, will last for eighteen years; and if on an elevation towards the east, south and south-east, a hundred years; if, however, they are built on a ground with an elevation to the north-east, they will last for a thousand, if to the west, twelve years, and to the north, eight years. Houses built on grounds sloping to the north with *athi* (Ficus racemosa) near them, those sloping to the east with *arayal* (Ficus religiosa) growing thereon, those with an inclination to the west, with Peràl (Ficus Indica) growing thereon, and grounds with *ithi* (Ficus Venosa) are fit for the occupation of the members of the four castes.

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The following trees, namely, *elanni* (Mimusops Elangi), or *perál* (Ficus Indica) growing on the eastern side of a house, *athi* (Ficus racemosa) or *puli* (Tamarindus Indica) on the southern side, *arayal* (Ficus religiosa), *pala* (Echites scholaris) or milk plant on the west, *ndga* tree (Trichosanthes anguina) and *ithi* (Ficus Venosa) on the north, will bring prosperity to the occupants. Jack and mango trees cocoanut and areca palms may grow on all sides of a house. *Arayál* (Ficus religiosa) growing on the eastern side of a house will cause it to take fire, while *perál* on the western side will give cause for fear from enemies. *Athi* on the northern side of the house will bring on abdominal complaints to the occupants. *Arávyal* growing near a house must be cut off, unless the distance between the house and the tree be twice the height of the latter. A cow-shed may be erected either to the east or the west of the main building; and a similar one to the south of it for bullocks and buffaloes. There are certain ceremonies performed both at the commencement of construction and at its various stages, as well as before the occupation of a house, a detailed description of which will be found in the account of the Brahmans. [1]

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13:Thurston & Rangachari E-4, 5 (no date) 1909
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Nayar

always shade from the many trees and palms. Every house is in its own seclusion."

Concerning Nāyar dwellings, Mr. N. Subramani Aiyar writes that "the houses of the Nāyar, standing in a separate compound, have been by many writers supposed to have been designed with special reference to the requirements of offence and defence, and Major Welsh states that the saying that every man's house is his castle is well verified here. The higher ambition of the Nāyar is, as has frequently been said, to possess a garden, wherein he can grow, without trouble or expense, the few necessaries of his existence. The garden surrounding the house is surrounded by a hedge or strong fence. At the entrance is an out-house, or patipura, which must have served as a kind of guard-room in mediæval times. In poorer houses its place is taken by a roofed door, generally provided with a stile to keep out cattle. The courtyard is washed with cow-dung, and diverse figures are drawn with white chalk on the fence. Usually there are three out-houses, a vadakkettu on the north side serving as a kitchen, a cattle-shed, and a tekketu on the southern side, where some family spirit is located. These are generally those of Maruta, *i.e.*, some member of the family who has died of small-pox. A sword or other weapon, and a seat or other emblem is located within this out-house, which is also known by the names of gurusala (the house of a saint), kalari (military training-ground), and daivappura (house of a deity). The tekketu is lighted up every evening, and periodical offerings are made to propitiate the deities enshrined within. In the south-west corner is the serpent kavu (grove), and by its side a tank for bathing purposes. Various useful trees are grown in the garden, such as the jack, areca palm, cocoanut, plantain, tamarind and mango.

435 Site values of land for building are getting higher and higher in the 'town', chiefly because the Shoranur-Cochin Railway now runs through this place, the principal offices of the taluk are here, and a high school has just been opened. Rs. 500 per acre may be paid in the 'town'; Rs. 50 to Rs. 100 in the rest of the village area. But the best wet land fetches up to Rs. 1,500 per acre. Cultivable land fetches far higher prices than building land, because only land unfit for cultivation, of which there is enough, is used for building.

423 The practice of exchanging lands is unknown. Generally, though not always, holdings are continuous. Field huts, built in [343] the midst of their fields, are often used by big farmers. The seeds, the harvested paddy and other crops, the stock, the implements, etc., are kept there.

296 *Subsidiary industries.*—Weaving is not practised. In the north-eastern part of the State, however, handloom weaving of an exquisite sort and also of a rough character is practised.

285 Mat-weaving of an exquisite pattern out of certain reeds duly coloured is practised by a set of people locally known as 'Koravas.' 735 The condition of these men, however, is miserable. They have no capital, no organization or culture, but usually make their wares to order, though now and then a few enterprising middlemen avail [787] themselves of these people's skill. They talk a jargon of Tamil [791] and Malayalam, and their females, like gipsies, beg from house to house and profess themselves to be adepts in palmistry. They make mats costing from Re. 1 to Rs. 15 or Rs. 20. They yet live from hand to mouth; and I have my doubts whether they will be able to keep up their skill unless knowing people help to raise their economic condition.

564 Every village moreover contains within its borders the following castes who follow their hereditary crafts:—the Marasari (carpenter), Kallasari (mason), Tattan (goldsmith), Musari (brazier), Kollan (blacksmith), and Tolkollan (leather-worker). There are a few families of each of these castes in Watakanchery also. "As their services are much in requisition and as they earn better wages than unskilled labourers, they are still engaged in their hereditary occupation. The first five groups are socially in a par with each other. They all interdine, but do not intermarry. But the Tolkollans are considered inferior in status to the rest and cannot touch them without causing pollution, probably on account of their [595] work in leather which in its raw state is considered impure. Polyandry of the fraternal type was prevalent among them, several brothers marrying one wife and the children being treated as common to all. This practice however is fast dying out, if it has [783] not already done so." (Census Reports.) One special feature in the caste-hierarchy is that these people are made to stand at a specified distance while approaching the higher castes (24 feet is the rule).

466 These castes minister to the every day needs of the community, executing their work generally to order. As they are very poor, they cannot afford to work on their own account on a commercial 326 scale. The village usually contains a recognized *desa-asari* (village smith) to whom the farmers pay a certain amount of paddy at the harvesting season of the year for the repair of their implements. None but the village-smith is entitled to this dole. These may entertain apprentices from their own caste-people, though the

31: Slater S-5 (1916-1917) 1918 AWI India
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313 purchased from the nearest markets and brought in carts. Wood is getting dearer and dearer. It used to be very cheap.

The increase in price is due to the felling of trees without replanting, increased outside demand for fuel, as by the railway company and the Shoranur Tile Works; and the better appreciation and consequent increased demand for the local timber trees.

361 *The village.*—Strictly speaking there is no village-site. The houses are not built in street formation, but are scattered throughout the village. This is characteristic of most villages in Malabar and strongly contrasts with what obtains in other districts. The area of the village is 2,380 acres.

Localization of castes is not complete. Brahmans are located in the centre around the temple, with the Nayars, and the other higher castes surrounding them. The Thiyyas or Ezhuvas live farther apart and the depressed classes—Cherumas, Pariahs, etc.—live far out of the way of the higher castes on the outskirts of the village in hovels on hill sides, which are unfrequented by the other castes. Of course there are social prohibitions to their approaching the higher castes, much more to living near them.

342 There are a few fine houses: about 20 are tiled and have two storeys, about half of them belonging to the Brahmans. About 100 are one-storeyed thatched houses, almost exclusively owned by the castes. The rest are mere huts used by the poorer classes. There is no terraced house at all. Most of the houses are pretty old, but the tiled ones are mostly of recent construction. The houses are built more or less on a uniform plan and are often large without being convenient or comfortable.

The Pariahs and Cherumas live in thatched huts, miserable hovels one should call them, small, dark and exposed.

351 Almost every house has a 'garden' of some sort, with a few fruit trees like the coconut-palm, the mango tree, the jack tree, the areca-palm, plantain trees, etc. But very few houses have really good gardens. The gardens are watered from wells, which are found in every house. Whether there are fruit-trees on it or no, each house of the better class has a compound attached to it. This is sometimes used for growing kitchen vegetables.

361 The distance of cultivated lands from the home of the cultivator is never more than one mile. In the working season the ryot starts very early in the morning from his home with his oxen and agricultural implements so as to reach his land in time.

343 Field huts are almost unknown—except tiny watchmen's huts where watch is kept by a man at night when the crops are getting ready for harvest.

323 *Subsidiary industries—Potters.*—There are no weavers. There is a class of potters, of Telugu origin (as their language shows) engaged in making pots for household use, etc. They get the clay for their industry from the banks of the Bharata river (situated to the south of the village). Their wares find a ready market in the neighbouring villages, being very cheap and necessary. The lower castes cook in pots of burnt clay, while the better classes use bronze and other metals, such as copper. The art is the whole time employment of this class. But earnings are not very high, only just affording the means of subsistence. If the art is refined and improved to suit modern conditions and requirements it